DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 233 990 SP 022 840

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TITLE Philosophy of Education and the Psychology of Learning.
PUB DATE [76]
NOTE 14p.
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Behavioral Objectives; *Curriculum Development; Decision Making; *Educational Philosophy; *Educational Psychology; Educational Theories; Ethics; Existentialism; Experimental Curriculum; Humanism; Individualism; *Learning Processes; Moral Values; Relevance (Education); Social Studies; *Teacher Attitudes

ABSTRACT

Part 1 of this paper discusses contributions made by diverse schools of thought in the philosophy of education to the development of a relevant social studies curriculum. The relevance of major philosophical approaches to teaching and learning is considered in light of the approaches' influences on instructors' teaching styles and students' learning processes. Philosophies such as experimentalism, existentialism, idealism, and realism are under consideration. Each of these philosophical attitudes is described, and its implications for teaching-learning situations are listed. In part 2, two schools of thought in the psychology of learning are discussed, and the ways they provide direction in the selection of objectives, learning activities, and appraisal techniques are examined. The contributions of behaviorists in helping educators understand how learning might take place are described, and the equally important tenets of humanists are discussed. (JD)

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PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION AND THE PSYCHOLOGY OF LEARNING

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Part One - Philosophy of Education

Diverse schools of thought in the philosophy of education have much to offer in developing a relevant social studies curriculum. Thus, teachers, administrators, and supervisors need to study significant educational philosophies to determine related implications within the framework of teaching-learning situations in ongoing units of study.

Experimentalism and the Social Studies

Experimentalists place major emphasis upon the concept of experience in the school curriculum and the curriculum of life. Thus, the real world of individuals and groups is experience. Human beings then perceive reality in terms of what is and can be experienced. Within the framework of the world of experiences, problems exist. These problems, perceived relevant in society, need identification. Adequate content must be gathered related to the problem. Thus, a hypothesis (or hypotheses) pertaining to the problem must be identified, followed by revising the hypothesis, if necessary. Further testing is continually necessary to revise the tentative hypothesis, if evidence warrants. Experimentalists emphasize that knowledge is tentative and not absolute. Thus, problems identified and their related hypotheses are subject to change. Permanent knowledge does not exist.

SP022 840

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The social studies curriculum in the class-school setting needs to relate to what is relevant in society. Thus, problems and questions identified in the social studies relate to realistic situations in society. School and society are not perceived as separate entities. The social studies curriculum and the curriculum of life are integrated entities.

In addition to perceiving school and society as being related, experimentalists emphasize that the interests and effort of pupils in learning are synonymous. Thus, effort in learning comes from interests possessed by pupils in ongoing units of study. Within the framework of problem solving situations in the curriculum, the interests of pupils provide effort in developing tentative solutions.

Change is a key concept pertaining to situations in school and in society. Static situations do not exist. Since change is a highly relevant term, according to experimentalists, problems continually arise and need attempted significant solutions.

Implications from experimentalism in developing the social studies curriculum may well include the following:

1. Pupils with teacher guidance should be involved in identifying and solving like-like problems.
2. Dualistic situations should not exist such as separating interests from efforts of learners as well as separating school from society in ongoing learning activities.
3. Each hypothesis to a problematic situation should be evaluated in terms of consequences.
4. Situations in life are constantly changing; thus new problems arise in the changing environment.

Existentialism and the Curriculum

Existentialists emphasize the importance of individuals continually making choices in the school curriculum and in the curriculum of life. If a person allows others to make decisions for oneself, this also represents a choice. However, to be an authentic human being, the person individually must do the choosing and making of decisions.

There are no predetermined objectives for individuals to achieve when entering the arena of life. Thus, open-ended situations exist in life to develop one's own personal aspirations and goals. Since many, many options exist in terms of objectives for individual pursuit, feelings of anxiety and tension may result. The personal choices or decisions made may end in desirable consequences. They may also result in failure and alienation. Situations in life are not rational, but appear to be absurd in many cases.

Implications for teachers pertaining to existentialism in the curriculum can include the following:

1. Pupils individually must be given ample opportunities to choose objectives and learning experiences.
2. Knowledge is subjective; thus the arts, values clarification, literature, history, and music should receive adequate emphasis in the curriculum.
3. Individuals in the school-class setting must be encouraged to make personal commitments in life. Moral judgments made by individuals in a free environment are an ultimate goal in teaching and learning.
4. The individual pupil is a chooser and thus determines criteria and standards in life. The teacher definitely does not dictate values

for pupils' acceptance. Nor does the teacher determine means and ends of learning for pupils. Certainly, the teacher should not expect pupils to accept rationality existing in life's situations.

Idealism and the Curriculum

Idealism is a more traditional approach in making decisions in the curriculum as compared to experimentalism and existentialism. According to idealists, individuals cannot know how the world truly is in terms of an objective reality. Each person, however, obtains ideas pertaining to objects and items in the environment. The mind brings order to what is observed and seen. Thus, of all facets of human development that is significant to develop, the mind or intellectual achievement must come first. Rich learning experiences will need to be in evidence to guide pupils to achieve maximum development mentally. These experiences may well be selected in terms of leading pupils to attain universal ideas and knowledge of the Absolute (God). These universal ideas need seeking and finding. Any one person may not achieve perfect understanding of these universal ideas and of God. However, each person may continually move closer in achieving ideals of universal ideas and of the Absolute.

Implications pertaining to teaching and learning in emphasizing idealism as a philosophy of education may well include the following:

1. The teacher must emphasize generalizations that have broad application in the moral dimension.
2. Worthy ideals need adequate emphasis in the school curriculum and the curriculum of life.
3. Intellectual development of learners must receive primary

emphasis in the curriculum.

4. Quality classes in literature and history, in particular, should guide pupils to attain worthy generalizations.
5. Abstract learnings must not be slighted in the curriculum. What is worthy in life goes beyond learning from the use of the five senses only.

Realism and the Curriculum

Realists generally emphasize that individuals may know the environment as it truly exists. Thus, human beings can know and perceive objects and items as they are. What is real then may be identified and objectified. The curriculum areas of science and mathematics, in particular, are significant for realists. Science and mathematics contain precise and accurate context. Pupils may understand accurate and real content in the science and mathematics arena. Other curriculum areas, of course, also have their relevance and may be objectified. Thus, for example, reading and the language arts, history, geography, aesthetics, and even values may contain objective content.

Implications from realism as a philosophy of education for teaching-learning situations may include the following:

1. Precise, measurable objectives need careful identification and use in the school curriculum.
2. Learning activities must be chosen to guide pupils to achieve these specific objectives. Ultimately, it can be measured if pupils have attained significant ends.
3. Objective subject matter can be identified in diverse curriculum

areas for pupil achievement. Even ethics and aesthetics contain objective content that individuals have felt to be good and beautiful through the ages.

Summary Statements on the Philosophy of Education

Teachers, supervisors, and principals need to study diverse schools of thought in the philosophy of education to notice relevant inherent guidelines applicable in teaching-learning situations. A carefully analyzed philosophy of education gives guidance and direction in the decision-making arena.

Questions for Consideration

1. Which school of thought in the philosophy of education do you adhere to generally? Give reasons for your thinking.
2. Visit an elementary school classroom; which philosophy or philosophies of education were emphasized in teaching-learning situations? What evidence was there to support your thinking?
3. Develop a lesson plan for the teaching of a specific social studies lesson. In the lesson plan, consistently emphasize one identified philosophical school of thought.

Part Two -- The Psychology of Learning

There are numerous schools of thought in the psychology of learning which provide direction in the selection of objectives, learning activities, and appraisal techniques. Professional educators need to be well versed

in the educational psychology arena to assist pupils to achieve optimally in intellectual, social, emotional, and physical growth.

Behaviorism and the Curriculum

Behaviorists have contributed much in helping educators understand how learning might take place. Behaviorists emphasize the significance of utilizing measurable objectives. These objectives are precise and specific. Little or no leeway exists in terms of interpreting what is to be taught when measurable goals are utilized. These objectives give direction in teaching-learning situations in that pupils will be attaining exactly that which is stated in the measurable ends. Thus, in the following objectives the teacher, as well as pupils, know with certainty what the latter are to achieve after instruction:

1. The pupil will write a seventy word paragraph on agricultural crops grown in the Middle East.
2. The pupil will list in writing at least ten possible causes for the present-day Middle East conflict.
3. The pupil will present an oral report comparing religious beliefs of Moslems and Jews.

After instruction, it can be determined if pupils have attained each of the above listed objectives. The teacher, having written these measurable objectives prior to instruction, basically knows with certainty what pupils are to learn. Guesswork then is eliminated in terms of directions that learning is to take place within pupils. Ideally, each pupil should be successful in achieving sequential measurable objectives. Gifted learners may successfully complete objectives more rapidly as compared

to slower achievers.

A further example pertaining to behaviorism in the school curriculum may well be illustrated with tenets of programmed learning. Programmed learning stresses the utilization of the following principles:

1. Each sequential step of learning is determined by the programmer.
2. Pupils rarely make an error when progressing in small orderly steps in the use of field-tested programmed materials. Reinforcement of learning is then in evidence.
3. Learners know immediately if a response made to a programmed item is correct or incorrect by checking with the answer given by the programmer.
4. Objectives, learning activities and content, as well as evaluation responses are determined by programmers.

The following description of sequential steps in learning, using a programmed text for pupils, may well be in emphasis in this method of teaching and learning:

1. The pupil reads a sentence or two, views a related picture, and then responds to a completion item.
2. The learner may then check his or her response with the correct answer provided by the programmer. The answer to each completion item being worked on may be covered with a commercially prepared strip of plastic. After the pupil responds to a completion item, the plastic strip is moved downward to cover the next sequential answer to a programmed item. Thus, the pupil may immediately check responses given with that of the programmers.

Advantages of programmed learning instruction include the following:

1. Pupils generally can be successful in each sequential step of learning.
2. Adequate self-concepts within the pupil may be developed due to ideal inherent success in field-tested programs of programmed instruction.
3. Pupils individually may achieve at their own optimal rate of achievement.
4. Learners know immediately if responses given to each programmed item are correct or incorrect.
5. Pupils may become quite independent in working toward optimal achievement in the use of programmed materials.

Disadvantages given for the utilization of programmed materials include the following:

1. Programmed learning does not lend itself to problem-solving situations.
2. The objectives, learning activities, and appraisal techniques have been determined by the programmer. There generally is no input from pupils in determining the curriculum.
3. Selected pupils may not need the small sequential steps of learning emphasized in many programmed materials.
4. Creative behavior and critical thinking is not emphasized in most programs.
5. Pupils have diverse learning styles; programmed learning will not meet the needs of selected pupils.

Humanism and the Curriculum

Humanists have selected criteria to emphasize within the framework of teaching-learning situations. The needs of pupils must be met before learning may occur. The following tenets of humanists are important to emphasize:

1. Reality is subjective according to how it is perceived by the individual person.
2. The self-concept of the individual is highly significant. Positive experiences, as perceived by pupils individually, definitely aid in developing an adequate self-concept.
3. Self-actualization on the part of each person is an ultimate relevant goal.
4. Human beings make decisions to achieve the optimal self.
5. The feeling dimension of individuals is highly significant to consider in teaching-learning situations.
6. A humane learning environment needs to be in evidence. Openness toward oneself and toward others is important. Mutual trust and respect is an ultimate objective.

A. H. Maslow, a leading humanist, recognizes a hierarchy of needs that must be met before learning in the school setting and in life may take place. The human needs, identified by Maslow, which must be met in general order of importance include the following:

1. physiological needs including food, rest, and shelter.
2. security needs.
3. love and belonging needs.
4. esteem needs.
5. self-actualization.

Thus, for example, a person needs adequate food, rest, and shelter before security needs are identified and ultimately resolved. Once security needs are met, being loved and having feelings of belonging must be met, and so on. The above numbered needs generally must be met sequentially before teaching and learning are of optimal benefit to pupils.

Implications from humanism in developing the curriculum include the following:

1. Pupils need to have ample opportunities to engage in decision-making practices. Thus, questions and problems in the curriculum may well be identified by pupils in a stimulating environment.
2. Adequate emphasis must be placed upon a curriculum of affect.
3. The teacher is a stimulator of pupil learning and not a lecturer or dispenser of content.
4. A distinction is made between teaching and learning in the school curriculum; learning as a concept, of course, is significant and emphasized by humanists.
5. Pupils must be guided to attain adequate self-concepts and realize optimal development.

Advantages given for humanism as a psychology of learning include the following:

1. Developing well in the affective dimension, as emphasized by humanists, should guide pupils to achieve well in other domains, e.g., understandings as well as skills.
2. Pupils identifying questions and problems in a stimulating environment provides for intrinsic motivation situations on the part of pupils.

3. Meeting diverse needs on the part of learners is important prior to emphasizing acquiring of concepts and generalizations in diverse curriculum areas.
4. Emphasizing a humane learning environment rather than static, formal teaching-learning situations is relevant for all pupils.

Disadvantages which may be listed for humanism in the educational psychology arena include the following:

1. Pupils have diverse learning styles; humanistic approaches may not meet the needs of selected learners.
2. It is difficult to stimulate selected pupils to become askers of questions. Also, some learners may not like discussion and problem solving approaches in the learning arena.

Summary Statements on the Psychology of Learning

Teachers, principals, and supervisors need to study, analyze, and ultimately implement desired principles of learning from diverse schools of thought in educational psychology. Utilization of concepts and generalizations from diverse schools of thought in educational psychology should aid pupils to achieve optimally in the school curriculum as well as in the curriculum of life.

Problems for Consideration and Discussion

1. Observe teaching-learning situations in selected classrooms to determine which school or schools of thought in the psychology of learning are being emphasized during specific intervals of time.

2. Read selected professional journal articles pertaining to the teaching of social studies. Which school of thought in educational psychology is generally being emphasized? Be able to justify your answer or answers.

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